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Statement submitted by Caritas Internationalis, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

Leave no one behind — Honouring the pledge!

Caritas Internationalis — as a global development and humanitarian network, walking closely with the poor — embraces the integrated and indivisible approach to a sustainable agenda that pledges to leave no one behind. We applaud that Leave No One Behind, has been selected as a theme for the 2016 HLPF. We believe that effective and holistic approaches to Leave no one behind will be key in the eradication of poverty.

What is “Leave no one behind”?

Caritas views this as an important principle that puts the dignity and equality of the human person at the heart of implementing the SDG agenda. It is our conviction that the Leave no one behind principle must be strengthened and showcased in the way that we approach the implementation of the SDGs.

We have learnt important lessons since the Millennium Development Goals, where accepting targets based on averages and easy-to-reach communities obscured the reality of marginalised groups. Our aim now is about transforming and changing the way development is done to ensure inclusion of the hardest to reach groups.

How can we ensure no one is left behind in the SDGs implementation?

Evidence from our work in more than 200 countries and territories around the world indicates that a successful approach to Leave no one behind is a long term effort that ensures social inclusion is mainstreamed in tackling poverty. An effective approach to Leave no one behind should embody and reflect some of the following principles:

1. Ensure from the onset that there is focus and action on the most marginalised through understanding the demographic composition of populations and social exclusion factors.

It is important to identify group-based identities (for example, women, youth, migrants, minorities) and their specific vulnerabilities leading to inequalities. It is also important to identify key markers of exclusion and in targets on various thematic areas, for example groups affected by climate change or conflict.

2. Build partnerships to enable the participation of the most marginalised

Place emphasis on participation, partnerships with civil society and faith groups, and institutional strengthening. National and global engagement strategies should meaningfully involve communities around SDGs, including by hearing the views of marginalised social and economic groups.

3. New channels for inclusion

Robust stakeholder participation can be achieved by recognising and validating a variety of spaces and ways of participating, such as group discussions, interviews, radio phone in, television and panel interviews with specific groups and expert group meetings. Use of reliable and verifiable data from various sources including citizen-generated data will also foster inclusion. Decision-makers should not just focus on officially established spaces but promote opportunities for all. To make the SDGs a reality, leaving no one behind, targets and indicators must be

locally contextualised and local communities empowered and supported to identify the concerns relevant to their particular context and decide indicators.

4. Address policies and barriers that hinder reaching the most marginalised groups

It is crucial to revisit national/global policies and implementation mechanisms to ensure that marginalised groups, such as vulnerable indigenous populations or poor small-scale farmers are not left behind. It is crucial to identify policies that perpetuate discrimination and increase inequalities, so as to address them to close the gaps. "Leave No One Behind" requires action on policy areas that are known to reduce inequalities and build resilience

Caritas Internationalis has been advocating in the past 3 years for the realization of the universal right to food by fighting the structural causes of food insecurity in its global Campaign "One Human Family, Food for All". Today it still advocates for change in policies, laws, the way we produce and consume food, but also for change in societies and cultures, so as to open access to resources for the most disadvantaged. Given that the consequences of food insecurity go well beyond hunger, hampering human development, we maintain that:

- The main solution to food insecurity is to support agriculture at small scale, considering that small-scale farmers produce most of the food that is eaten in the world and are usually not addressed by main agriculture policies;
- Lack of access to production resources, low agricultural productivity, climate change and inadequate policies are the main causes of food insecurity worldwide and communities facing these challenges should be prioritised; it is urgent to create an enabling policy environment for small-scale farmers, lifting those barriers that hamper access to production resources such as land, seeds, equipment, know-how etc., in view of changing our development paradigm, enhancing climate change adaptation and resilience, fighting poverty and inequality in the world;
- Women must have equal access to and control of resources for food production; as women make up for the majority of small-scale farmers in the world, it is crucial to revise unfair laws and policies so as to allow women equal opportunities to own, possess and make use of land, means of production, access training, education and opportunities to actively participate in public affairs;
- A good agricultural market system, in particular the promotion of local markets, is a powerful instrument to avert the consequences of food insecurity for marginalised communities; policies must be adopted or, where existing, reviewed, so as to open space for small-scale farmers in domestic markets, in particular local ones, so as to enjoy access to equal income opportunities;
- Civil society dialogue with policymakers has to be opened and strengthened in view of improving policies, laws and systems to ensure food security. Civil society can play a role at different levels, such as gathering data and evidence, engaging in research, policy and advocacy, holding governments to account and delivering services to the most marginalised.

5. Provide dedicated resources for all to participate

Legitimate and authentic participatory processes require investment. Resources and capacity are enablers for effective use of information and meaningful participation in the SDG implementation; without these enablers, participation processes can disproportionately favour those with greater resources. It must be ensured that resources and capacity-building reach all, especially marginalised groups.

Vatican City, 22 April 2016